

Barbara Silva  
22 Bonazzo Drive  
Trumbull, CT 06611

Labor and Public Employees Committee  
Legislative Office Building  
300 Capitol Avenue  
Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Committee Members:

My name is Barbara Silva. I have been a domestic worker for seven years. I take care of three kids while their parents go to work, run errands and/or go out at night. The family I work for respects me and pay me for all the hours I work there. However, such employers are not very common in our industry. I was very lucky to find such a family, unlike my mom and most of my friends who do domestic work. My mom, as a housecleaner, used to work more than forty hours a week and get paid only five dollars an hour. I remember getting home from school and having nobody there because she was still working. Once she got home she was exhausted and starving. She worked from 7 in the morning to 5 in the afternoon without eating anything and with no breaks whatsoever. She couldn't complain about anything or they would fire her. She was often humiliated because of her ethnicity. Employees would cancel her workday with only a couple of minutes notice and not pay her for that day. Sometimes she would work 50 hrs and they would only pay her for 35 hours; which always affected us as a family since she was the main provider at home. All of those experiences have shown us that we certainly don't have basic rights and respect as domestic workers. My question is – How long will we have to rely on luck to be respected? We need laws to protect us, not luck.

Sincerely,

Barbara Silva